



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.14

Subject: Child Protective Services Large Scale Investigations

Supersedes: INV 44 and INV 202

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Approved by:

Effective date: 05/01/01

Revision date:

Application

To All Child Protective Services Case Managers, Team Leaders, Team Coordinators and Regional Administrators

Authority: TCA 37-1-406; 37-5-106

Policy

The Department of Children's Services is mandated by law to investigate all reports of possible harm to children by parents or caretakers. The caretaker may be someone who is entrusted with the care of the child, such as a babysitter, scout leader, teacher, tutor, childcare provider, or professional person in a residential care facility. These investigations can be particularly challenging since they may involve large groups of children or a population of children who have special problems or difficulty communicating. In an effort to respond quickly and effectively to these complex cases, DCS has established a Special Assist Team (SAT) to respond to certain situations.

Procedures

A. Criteria for Special Assist Team (SAT) investigation

The Special Assist Team (SAT) may be deployed in the following sexual abuse situations:

1. Investigations that may involve multiple perpetrators in a child care or residential setting, or
2. Investigations that are anticipated to involve ten or more minors who may be alleged victims or collaterals who are:
 - ◆ Under the age of six, or

- ◆ Severely language-delayed, or
- ◆ Present or past victims of sexual abuse, or
- ◆ Behavior-disordered, “unruly”, or delinquent youth in a residential setting

B. Deployment of SAT

To deploy the SAT, the local team leader must immediately consult with the SAT program coordinator in central office when he or she learns information suggesting that one of the situations listed above may exist. The team leader must consult with the SAT Program Coordinator before moving forward with investigative interviewing.

C. Assessment of appropriate level for SAT response

The SAT’s response to these reports can begin with one of five levels:

1. **Consultation** – One of the SAT team leaders may be sent on site to consult with local staff on gathering and analyzing information.
2. **Exploration** – One or two SAT case managers may be sent to a site to conduct initial interviews and to clarify the nature of the referral.
3. **Assist local area** – case managers may be sent to a county office to help local staff under the supervision of the local team leader or team coordinator.
4. **Partial deployment** – The SAT program coordinator or team leader will work with local/regional staff and law enforcement to develop a strategy. Two or three SAT case managers work with local staff in conducting interviews.
5. **Full deployment of SAT** – The SAT program coordinator and/or team leader develop the investigative strategy with local staff and law enforcement. SAT case managers conduct interviews and gather evidence.

D. Local office will be responsible for other out-of-home investigations

1. The local county office will investigate out-of-home investigations that do not fit the criteria for deployment of the SAT.
2. Local staff may call the SAT program coordinator in Central Office for help and consultation on other complex investigations, including physical abuse.

Forms

None

Collateral Documents

None

Standards

None